The Influence of Fascism in Brazil

By ELLEN WARD

WHAT has happened in Brazil as a result of the intense fascist pressure being exerted there? In November of last year, a personal military dictatorship was established by President Getulio Vargas. He announced a new constitution with corporate features. The first official statement issued after the coup was that the new state would make no alliances with the Italian, German or Japanese combine. "There will be a reinforced and enlarged effort to insure and develop the traditional relations of friendship uniting Brazil and the United States following the good-neighbor policy of President Roosevelt whom Brazil regards as the world's greatest statesman." So much, then, to assure the United States government that as far as its interests were concerned everything was all right in the new move in Brazil. Those who are close to the Brazilian situation declare that the move of Vargas was made to forestall the seizure of power by the fascists, or the Integralistas as they are called in Brazil. This version seems to be borne out by the happenings in Rio de Janeiro on March 19, when Vargas uncovered a plot for his assassination and for the seizure of power by Plinio Calgadao and his followers under the fascist banner. It appears that the plot was discovered just in the nick of time and the leaders all arrested. In the general scramble to save their individual skins, they are falling all over each other to tell the government all they know about the other fellow.

The Integralista movement is highly nationalistic and generously financed by those large landowners who are in political opposition to Vargas, by the Church and by the European fascists. Fascists thruout Latin America speak a sort of scrambled dialect of the European fascist movements. The Integralistas of Brazil have established political as well as semi-military organizations for the propagation of their views. This has not been very simple to put over and most difficult to differentiate from already existing terminology since most of the Latin American countries have dictatorships and have had them since the days of their independence from Spain and Portugal. And after all, enthusiasms based on extreme feelings of nationalism are handicapped by a very limited vocabulary. The result is that what has seeped down to the masses are many phrases filled with confusion. So-called programs differ from region to region and from group to group. These "programs" in Brazil have much in common with expressions of military dictators in other parts of Latin America. The Latin-American "man on horseback," however, has shown little inclination to impose totalitarian control over social and cultural life—a la Hitler. They prefer a one-man dictatorship with a great many so-called democratic trimmings. This is an institution peculiar to Latin America. Its dictators even grant a semblance of tolerance to oppositions provided such oppositions do not seriously challenge their power or interfere with the interests of the clique controlling the dictatorship.

In the majority of the Latin American countries, the fascist movements lack mass support. In Brazil, however, it is claimed that the Integralistas number anywhere from 200,000 to a million. Here the fascist movement has been recruited from the rich younger generation, from among government employees, clerks and students.

Under the pressure of the Integralista movement and the influence of the European fascist example, the Vargas dictatorship has itself taken on elements of a fascist coloring. While it continues the tradition of Latin American military dictatorship, it has tossed overboard many of the traditional "democratic" trimmings in favor of the newer styles.

Getulio Vargas has declared him-

(*Continued on Page* 5)

General. That official, as an agent of Congress, had to approve all vouchers before any money could be spent, certifying that the outlay was being made in accordance with the law. Under the Reorganization Bill, this power is abolished and audit is made a purely executive accounting function taking place after the expenditure is made.

The bill also abolishes the bipartisan independent Civil Service Commission of three, no more than two of whom could be members of the same political party, and substitutes a single administrator appointed by the President. The administrator has a term of 15 years, which is supposed to give him independence. As a matter of fact, this is no guarantee, for there is little doubt that the President could remove an administrator, just as he recently removed the chairman of the T.V.A., despite the latter's term of nine years.

Concentration Of Executive Power

The whole bill concentrates tremendous powers in the President's hands and diminishes the powers of Congress. Despite the fact that the anti-Roosevelt opposition has been making the bill the focal point of an attack upon the Administration, the bill is really the culmination of a tendency long in process. The principles underlying the measure have been urged by Republicans as well as Democrats for decades. Capitalist government, under present complex conditions, makes for an increase of executive authority at legislative expense. The tendency is inherent in the system. Thus does capitalist political democracy demonstrate the process of its own decay.

Altho the powers to reorganize under this bill lapse after two years, there is ample opportunity for the entire structure of government to be revamped. This is not "merely," as the professors insist, a "matter of administration." Governmental agencies represent public functions and what is done to the former has a big share in determining the operations of the latter. The increased powers of the Executive on "matters of administration," therefore, means increased power, with fewer and fewer Congressional restraints, to chart and control the course of public policy itself.

---

the capitalist elite, it brings freedom; to the masses, complete enslavement; to the revolutionary vanguard, physical annihilation.

The dictatorship of the proletariat openly proclaims freedom for the lower social layers as against freedom for counter-revolution, for, at critical moments in the struggle, the great question is to defeat the class enemy and this determines all behavior. Hence the "despotism of liberty" about which so much was said in the French Revolution. But, at the same time, the proletarian dictatorship is, from the very beginning, proletarian democracy, materially assuring millions of people their full rights and the opportunity of exercising them. The final victory of socialism will make unnecessary even these privileges of the proletariat and will usher in a new phase of socialist democracy.

The Influence of Fascism in Brazil

(*Continued from Page* 3)

self "supreme authority of the state." He has assumed the right to: 1. initiate legislation; 2. suspend Congress; 3. legislate by decree; 4. suspend state legislatures; 5. rule thru federal commissions; and 6. to run for re-election as many times as he pleases.

Vargas's main strength lies in the army whose officers he has bribed and pampered and fattened against just such an eventuality. The Brazilian fascists, the Integralistas, are, of course, not very happy over the present situation, because Vargas has grabbed the juiciest of plums just as it was dangling before their watering mouths. For over half a decade, they have worked day and night only to see their prize snatched from them.

These Brazilian Green Shirts were organized in 1933 by Plinio Salgado. He admits financial aid from the German government. The party has a large daily in Rio de Janeiro, its own broadcasting station over which it broadcasts constantly anti-labor and anti-Semitic propaganda. The slogans of the Integralistas are GOD - COUNTRY - FAMILY. Part of their proclamation published at the close of 1937 reads:

"We are against partisans of all denominations. Against them, methods of violence should be employed. They are the only methods worthy of those who love Brazil sincerely. We are not organizing troops for parade purposes alone. Every liberal and every democrat has become evil, a conscienceless person, an irrational animal, who should be treated with energy, just as madmen are treated. This is the significance of our violence."

(*Concluded next week*)